

J. A B E L ' S

*PROPOSALS*

FOR

A GENERAL LIBRARY.

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THE expensive Stile in which all new Books of any Estimation are now offered to the Public not only prevents many intelligent Individuals from purchasing, but exceeds the Price which most Keepers of Circulating Libraries can prudently allow for the Accommodation of their Subscribers, who are therefore under the Necessity of reading Abridgements, often incorrect, and which perhaps do not appear till the public Curiosity, satiated with the Subject in Question, is excited by some new Pursuit. Book Clubs, while they in some Measure obviate these Inconveniences, are generally subject to others almost equally contrary to the grand Object in View, which is to preserve and circulate the new Discoveries and valuable Ideas of our Contemporaries, at the smallest possible Expence. A Club which is kept up by periodical social Meetings must necessarily be confined within the narrow Limits of a particular Society, cramped by their Uniformity of Sentiments and Pursuits, as well as by the Smallness of the Funds, of which perhaps a large Portion is absorbed by the unavoidable Expences of their Meetings. The Custom also of annually selling or dividing the Stock of Books prevents any Possibility of Reference to valuable Works, and deprives the Society of many Benefits which in a few Years would arise from their Accumulation.

To secure these Benefits, not to any particular Set of Men, but to the Public at large, it is proposed to establish a PUBLIC LIBRARY, on the following Plan:—

1st. That each Subscriber annually pay the Sum of One Guinea, at or before and that any Person not paying his Subscription before cannot be admitted to receive the Privilege of a Subscriber for that Year.

2d. That the Librarian who is to provide the Books, and keep an Account of their Disposal, and of the Money belonging to the Society, shall, in Consideration of his Trouble, receive Ten per Cent. of the Amount of the Subscription; the Remainder to be laid out as follows, in the Purchase of Books, which are to be the Property of the Subscribers, and to accumulate for their Benefit.

3d. That on the Day of each Year the Subscribers shall chuse by Ballot three Auditors, who shall inspect the Librarian's Accounts, see that the Rules and Orders of the Society are preserved, and if they see Cause, may call a Meeting of the

the Subscribers, or propose a Ballot on any Question relating to the Establishment, giving a Fortnight's Notice of the same.

4th. The Subscribers shall have the Liberty to propose Books to the Amount of their Subscription, (whereby, if a few concur in one Order, Books of any Value might be bought) for which Purpose the Librarian shall keep a Book open for the Inspection of the Subscribers, wherein shall be entered the Book proposed, the Name of the Proposer, and the Date; and if no Objection is made to the same within fourteen Days, he shall order the Book in Course; but if any three Subscribers shall within that Time express their Disapprobation, Notice shall be given to the Proposer, and if he does not chuse to withdraw, a Ballot shall be taken upon it, on the second Monday in the following Month.

5th. If any Money shall remain at the End of the Year undisposed of, the Auditors shall in like Manner propose Books to the Amount.

6th. The Person ordering a Book to have the first reading of it, and every other Subscriber who chuses to put down his Name for it shall have it in Rotation, according to the Date of their Application. That every Book less than Octavo may be kept for each Volume; that Octavos may be kept for each Volume; Quartos and Folios for each Volume.

7th. That whoever keeps a Book longer than the limited Time shall forfeit a Day for such Time of Default, till it amount to the Value of the Book; and shall also return the Book to the Society.

8th. If any Book be lost, torn, damaged, wrote in, or otherwise injured, while in the Possession of any Person, that Book, or if it belong to a Set, that Set of Books, to be paid for by such Person, at the original Price.

As soon as Thirty Persons have honoured J. ABEL with their Subscriptions, he shall call a Meeting of the Subscribers, in Order to chuse Auditors to fill up the above Blanks, and establish any other Rules they may find expedient.

NORTHAMPTON, *March 4th, 1800.*

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